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25 years on - from cultural studies to intercultural citizenship

Michael Byram

Introduction: *modus operandi*

In September 2013, the new editor of *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, Durk Gorter, invited me to write a 'reflection article', which would also be forward-looking, based on an article I had written 25 years before for the first issue of the journal in 1988 (Byram, 1988). The first editor, Eoghan MacAogáin, invited that article when he was setting up the journal and, as I thought the journal was calling attention to a gap in the field, I was happy to accept the invitation. It was, too, an opportunity to write, in article form, the ideas which were being formulated and written for a monograph which appeared a year later (Byram, 1989). I had not read the original article again, as I very seldom re-read my published work.

The article opens with the statement that 'Foreign language learning is educational'. This was in a sense a protest against the contemporary focus on the practical and instrumental purposes of language teaching and learning. The purpose of the article, it is stated a little later, is to show how the educational value can be realised. The first parts thus present arguments for the educational value and draw in particular upon the German tradition of teaching *Landeskunde* (literally: 'country-knowledge'), where the political dimension of all education, including foreign language education, is more explicit than elsewhere. Another part of the article discusses how foreign language education can and should be related to 'intercultural education' a phrase used at that time to refer to the education of children of migration. There follows a section on the relationship between language and culture as a basis for analysing areas which need to be developed further if the argument presented so far is accepted. Four areas were identified together with the question of teacher education and research, and I return to these below. The article ends with the presentation of a model in which I show how linguistic learning, knowledge and skills, and cultural learning, knowledge and experience, might be combined in a curriculum for foreign language teaching.

My first reaction to re-reading, on which the first part of this present article is based, was a certain satisfaction because I found continuities and differences, improvements I hope, between what I wrote then and what I write now. Following the present editor's advice, I focus in this article on the four substantial areas and the 'need for theory' which I highlighted in 1988. The first area was '*the value of cultural studies* within language teaching and within the whole curriculum of general education'. At the time I feared that language teachers were too concerned with the instrumental purposes of language teaching for communication and needed to be reminded of the educational value of language learning. The second area was '*the pedagogical development of an adequate didactic for cultural studies*'. This would be a matter of taking into account how cultures are analysed, what is known about psychological processes of engagement with another culture, and curriculum theory to help structure the approach taken. The third area was '*the methodology of cultural studies teaching*', in particular what role teacher training might play in the development of a methodology, and the

techniques and ideas which would emerge from empirical studies. Finally there was the question of ‘*assessment and evaluation*’. My concern here was that if assessment pays attention only to the learning of language skills and knowledge – communicative competence – then there would be little attention to teaching anything else. At the same time it would be necessary to have constant ‘formative evaluation’ of the teaching of cultural studies to ensure that improvement took place. The question of theory was addressed by a relatively brief discussion of theories of culture, of what that most complex of terms might mean, and of how children are socialised and acquire their culture, with references to anthropology and development psychology.

In preparing this article, it occurred to me that it would be interesting to have not just my personal comments on developments over 25 years but to draw upon the ideas of others. One of those developments has been the founding and expansion of the Cultnet group (<http://cultnetworld.wordpress.com>) currently comprising over 190 members, some active others simply receiving information. The group aims to provide mutual support and help for doctoral and other researchers who are working on what is broadly called ‘the cultural dimension’ in foreign language teaching. I decided to ask the group to help me to respond to Durk Gorter's invitation both because they have been an important part of my own understanding of the field and because many of them have been active and innovative for a large part of the period since 1988, meeting for the first time in 1997. Much of this text is based on the replies of 14 members of Cultnet¹, a group who are of course far from dispassionate but who tried to be objective in their comments. I begin then with my personal reflection and thereafter take up the ‘further questions’ and issues as Cultnet members and I see them.

A personal view

I was pleasantly surprised to see that in 1988, I already emphasised not only the educational value of the cultural dimension of foreign language teaching but also its political import: ‘the responsibility of language teachers for introducing learners to another culture involves them in decisions which are educational and political’ (1988:17). I owed much of this to my reading of the German theory of *Landeskunde* and to my collaboration with Dieter Buttjes and Hugh Starkey. Buttjes' phrase ‘political-action orientation’ was however to come to full fruition only 20 years later in the theory of ‘intercultural citizenship’ (Alred, Byram and Fleming, 2006; Byram, 2008). The statement I made in 1988 that ‘language teaching may thus be a springboard for political action’ (p. 18) is now being realised in a project on intercultural citizenship (Byram et al., forthcoming; Porto, 2014). In between, in the 1990s,

¹ I am grateful to: Leah Davcheva, Irina Golubeva, Yannan Guo, Jing Mei Han, Stephanie Houghton, Ildikó Lázár, Ulla Lundgren, Melina Porto, Shuoqian Qin, Gertrud Tarp, Jessica Yau Tsai, Lone Svarstad, and Heather Richards and Clare Conway. I am also grateful to Paula Garrett-Rucks for information about ‘world languages’ teaching in the USA. They sent me detailed comments on more than one occasion and their views will be cited in the text by reference to their name.

this idea appeared in a model of intercultural competence as ‘critical cultural awareness’ or ‘savoir s’engager’ (Byram, 1997a). The model was based on work Geneviève Zarate and I did for the Council of Europe in developing the concept of intercultural competence (Byram and Zarate, 1996) but that work had not included reference to the political, perhaps because we were aware that it would not be appropriate in the Council of Europe context.

It was in writing for the Council of Europe in the 1990s that Zarate and I introduced the notion of the ‘intercultural speaker’ (cf. Byram, 2009) to contrast with the (cultural) competence of the native speaker. In 1988, I had stated that ‘if pupils are to understand the culture from the inside and eschew the tourist-consumer viewpoint which is currently dominant, they must use the language as it is used by native speakers not merely in grammatical but more importantly in semantic terms’ (p. 22). This leaves unclear whether such language use also implies an identification with a/the native speaker. However, as a school teacher, I never gave my pupils French or German names in my language lessons, as was then the fashion, and this suggests that I did not want them to take on a new identity. I am not sure that I thought about this too much at the time. On the other hand the notion of the intercultural speaker goes further than what is stated in 1988, since it includes not only the ability to understand a native speaker’s semantics but also compare and contrast with the learner’s own.

In the quotation in the previous paragraph, the reference to ‘the culture’ is implicitly to a foreign country. There is however, in 1988, a section on ‘foreign language teaching and intercultural education’ and on what was known as ‘the Swann report’ on the education of new minorities in Britain (DES, 1985). I wrote that ‘the aims of foreign language teaching to create understanding and tolerance of one particular kind of otherness (...) ought to be a basis for cooperation [of foreign language teachers with other teachers] and contribution to education in multi-ethnic societies’ (p. 19) but that line of thought has not been developed further either in my work or in that of others. The reference to ‘the culture’ would probably incite today accusations of ‘essentialism’ but should be understood by reference to Geertz’s famous concept of ‘webs of significance’ (Geertz, 1975) which I cited immediately after, and where the plurality of ‘webs’ means that the accusation of essentialism would be misplaced.

A further change of terminology is significant. Instead of referring to ‘cultural studies’ in foreign language education, later emphasis has been on the ‘competence’ of the learner, a shift which is also evident in the later focus on a model of competence (Byram, 1997a) rather than the 1988 model of the curriculum, as we shall see below. ‘Cultural studies’ was a phrase I had used without much reflection until I began to work with a British Council group chaired by Susan Bassnett. In this context, the term referred to the academic study of any aspect of Britain and British life past and present, under the title ‘British Cultural Studies’ (Bassnett, 1997; Mountford and Wadham-Smith, 2000). The study of literature had a major role, and I realised that, despite my own doctoral research on literature, influenced by Raymond Williams and others who wrote from a sociology of literature perspective, I had not allocated any significant role to literary studies in my thinking about foreign language teaching. This has remained a gap in my work, perhaps because I was most concerned to offer help to teachers of beginner and intermediate learners, despite having, as a schoolteacher, taught

from beginners to advanced learners, introducing the latter to the classics of French and German literature. Later, I worked with Lothar Bredella on the teaching of literature in an intercultural perspective and admired his research with colleagues in Giessen and with Werner Delanoy (e.g. Bredella and Delanoy, 1996). This became important for me and some of my students (e.g. Gonçalves Matos, 2011). I have also always admired Claire Kramsch's work with literature as well as her many other contributions, and in particular her combination of teaching and research (e.g. 1993 and 2003).

The final part of the 1988 article presented a model of 'interrelated dimensions of language and culture teaching'. This is an attempt to clarify relationships among different aspects of foreign language teaching and was further explained in the subsequent book (1989). It combines my previous work on 'language awareness' (Byram, 1978 and 1985) with what was to become my main focus in a different model i.e. intercultural competence and critical cultural awareness. The 1988/89 model indicates that 'language' and 'culture' should be taught in an integrated fashion. This was not developed properly in my subsequent work and Risager (2007:121) rightly criticises the lack of an explicit discussion of the 'relationship between language and culture' in my 1997 model, despite some small attempts to anticipate this criticism (Byram 1997b and 2012).

When asked to comment for this present article on 'my model', without my making clear that it was the one from 1988/89, Cultnet members referred without further thought to the one produced in 1997. The model from 1988/89 is unfortunately forgotten, also to a large extent by me. The 1997 model is significantly different from that of 1988/89. Rather than proposing an approach to planning the whole language teaching curriculum which gives space to language and culture, to language awareness and to cultural experience as in 1988/89, the model from 1997 focuses on how teachers can plan lessons on the basis of the objectives and the learning outcomes they desire for their learners. It also includes discussion of how the learning can be assessed. This is therefore more learner-oriented than the earlier model but the objectives do not include the specification of language learning or language awareness objectives – or indeed cultural experience objectives – and the model is therefore narrower in scope and ambition.

The influence of the 1997 model seems to be self-evident in the minds of Cultnet people, a biased view, but it is also well-established more widely as is evident from citation in policy documents, academic books and articles, doctoral theses and in surveys, as we shall see below. However, how this has happened and what criticisms have arisen in the meantime, cannot be the focus of this article.

The wider perspective

As indicated above, in 1988 I identified 'four key areas for further work'. From the perspective of 2014, we can ask what progress has been made in each of these, whether others appeared in the meantime, and what have been/will be the facilitating or impeding

factors in development and progress. It is here that I draw upon the comments of Cultnet members.

The value of cultural studies

In 1988, I wanted to underline the need to persuade teachers of the educational value of their work, and I also saw the necessity of ensuring that teachers of other subjects should understand this value, perhaps as a consequence of my experience as a school teacher². I was thinking too of those who make and implement policy, from headteachers to ministers of education, and those who work in industry and commerce.

Among Cultnet people, there is a consensus that 'The value of cultural studies has been widely acknowledged, researched and written about by many since 1988, though not necessarily under the heading cultural studies', as Lázár says, who has done an annotated bibliography (forthcoming) for the Council of Europe and says as a consequence 'it is still interesting to review the many terms that are sometimes used interchangeably for cultural studies in Foreign Language teaching'. Due to theoretical work, 'Nobody would endorse now the tourist-consumer view of culture you refer to in the 1988 article for instance' (Porto); 'nobody seems to question the importance of 'cultural studies' in foreign language education (...) the development of intercultural communicative competence in foreign language education is widely accepted as an essential competence' (Golubeva). More specifically, 'In China, the recent 5 to 10 years have witnessed unprecedented increased numbers of language teachers who have realised the importance of intercultural communicative competence.' (Qin, endorsed by Jing). A similar situation appears in Bulgaria and is linked to the societal changes at the end of the USSR and its dominance in Eastern Europe:

Prompted by the new realities of falling walls between Bulgaria and most of the other world, opening horizons, economic possibilities, but also limitations, language teachers were becoming increasingly aware of the need to work with their pupils on what mobility – of goods, people, ideas, education, travel, business – means and to equip them with the tools to understand their own and others' ways of being. This is how, in what I would call an organic way, some of the teachers in my country began to attribute more and more value to the development of cultural studies teaching and actually do it in their classrooms. These teachers got together in a professional network and were the first to move forward. Other educational bodies (Ministry of education, In-service teacher training institute) followed and / or had the grace to acknowledge the developments that ensued. (Davcheva)

The evaluation in Scandinavia is less optimistic, with some acknowledgement in Sweden of a different approach to that of giving stereotype-inducing *Landeskunde* information in

² As a Head of Languages in a secondary comprehensive school in the 1970s, I saw that other teachers thought of language teaching as having solely an instrumental purpose and of being of little educational value or even of instrumental use for speakers of English. I had to defend the teaching of languages and especially the teaching of a second foreign language. I wrote a paper distributed to the whole staff – now long lost – in which I made the educational (but not yet the political) argument in ways which were further developed in the 1980s.

textbooks and a move to 'A tendency to value a non-essentialistic view or concept of culture (...) in textbooks (though much still needs to be done)' (Lundgren). However, she continues, 'This view of culture is still not highlighted in the Foreign Language curriculum'. There is a recognition of the concept of 'intercultural' in public discourse 'but mostly with focus on understanding otherness. In the meaning of understanding yourself and questioning your own values it is still mostly neglected.' Furthermore, there has been a regrettable step backwards: 'In 2011 a new curriculum was introduced. The term 'intercultural' is now nonexistent. Consequently the concepts 'intercultural competence' and 'intercultural understanding' are no longer included and there is no such issue as assessment and progression mentioned in connection to these concepts.'

A similar mixed situation is apparent in Denmark according to Svarstad. 'The national understanding of culture is still dominant in many teachers' perceptions of what it is to teach culture. There doesn't seem to be a link between teaching a foreign language and cultural studies' but 'in the curriculum from 2014 there is a stronger focus on intercultural competence. The learning objectives include: The pupil can act independently in international cultural encounters on the basis of an understanding of cultural and societal relations.' At upper secondary level, according to Tarp, teachers are more oriented to theories of 'cultural studies' as this is mentioned in the course descriptions alongside 'literature, society, essay writing, stylistics and grammar'. However, this often leads to teachers choosing texts originating from theory which students have difficulty understanding:

Often teachers choose cultural studies texts originating from e.g. Richard R. Gesteland, William Gudykunst, Edward T. Hall and Geert Hofstede. The cultural studies text material takes a rather static understanding of culture and attempts to reduce it to a list of behaviors perceived to be common within different countries (...) At the oral exam most students show little understanding, rather misunderstanding of the texts relating to cultural studies or for that matter of their own culture in comparison.'

It is advisable to pay attention to what students can handle, to their stages of development; the study of literature in fact seems to 'give students much more insight' and 'the integration of literary and cultural studies might be best' (Tarp).

The strongest statements come from New Zealand and Argentina. In the former 'cultural studies is now recognized as a core part of the Learning Languages area of the *NZ Curriculum 2007*. 'Culture and Language are now two equally weighted strands of Knowledge Awareness that support students' ability to communicate' (Conway and Richards). In Argentina,

there exist recent curricular documents that adopt not only the intercultural perspective but also the citizenship perspective for instance in ELT. At the national level, these perspectives are echoed in the national curriculum guidelines (*Núcleos de aprendizaje prioritario*, NAP) for the teaching of foreign languages generally (not only English). At the provincial level, the 2008 English curriculum for primary school

in the Province of Buenos Aires (...) which has the second largest and most complex system of education in Latin America) explicitly acknowledges that teaching English in the 21st century necessarily involves an ‘intercultural dimension’. (Porto)

All this is at the level of policy and, to some extent, textbook writing:

Language course books also focus more on cultural input these days although many still stay at a superficial tourist information level and only feature stereotypical images of the target culture without acknowledging and even more importantly, conveying the message that the language to be acquired (especially but not only in the case of English) will be used with other non-native speakers in the target language culture(s) or elsewhere. (Lázár)

Although textbooks can have impact on teaching practices, Porto argues that ‘Practice is a different matter. It is hard for the ordinary teacher to see what all the theoretical developments mean in practice’. As a result, in Argentina the province of Buenos Aires has launched an ambitious teacher education and materials production programme integrating intercultural and citizenship objectives (<http://servicios2.abc.gov.ar/lainstitucion/organismos/lenguasextranjerias/plurilingue/>) (Porto). This is important as some research has shown that textbooks may be mis-used if teachers have not been trained (Lázár, 2011).

A further valuable source for information about policy, and practice, in European Union countries, is provided by an EU-funded project *Languages and cultures in Europe (LACE)*, analysing curricula in 13 countries. In answer to the question *What objectives in the area of intercultural competences are prescribed by foreign language curricula?*, the report summarises as follows:

- The national curricula pay most attention to the development of linguistic competences and communication skills. (Inter)cultural competences (if included in the curriculum) get considerably less consideration.
- There are important differences between countries and between levels.
- Intercultural competence as an objective focuses to a large extent on knowledge and attitudes.

(European Union, 2007: 7)

The LACE study used my 1997 model, of which more below, as an approach to analysing the details of curricula.

Pedagogy and didactics

The second key area in 1988 was *the pedagogical development of an adequate didactic for cultural studies*. This referred principally to the need to:

structure cultural studies in a pedagogical manner which takes account of ways of structuring our knowledge of the world and of other cultures. It must be influenced by knowledge of cognitive and affective learning processes, and clearly linked to the pedagogy of language teaching in its existing and developing forms.’ (1988:23)

To some extent this anticipated some of the chapters in Byram (1989) entitled ‘Analysing, describing and understanding a foreign culture’ and ‘Psychological dimensions of cultural studies learning’ and ‘Cultural studies within foreign language teaching’. There is much more theoretical work since then, often mentioned by Cultnet members, who are very familiar with such research (notably: Kramsch, 1993; Risager, 2007) and it has established a substantial basis for research and development both in published work (e.g. Corbett, 2003 and 2010) and in doctoral work (e.g. Antonenko, 2010; Bastos, 2014; Forsmann, 2006; Houghton, 2012; Nguyen 2013; Woodin, 2010– these are some interesting ones I know of but there are many more). It is not evident however that other researchers and those who write for publication have absorbed this work to any substantial extent. For example it is only in 2015 that a plenary on these issues will be included in the TESOL annual conference and, as Porto points out, the *TESOL Quarterly* has very few articles dealing with intercultural competence.

In the USA, the publication of the ‘Standards’ (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1996) was an important event in our field since the ‘5 C’s’, the dimensions of language teaching, included ‘Cultures’ described in terms of ‘products, practices and perspectives’ (Met and Byram, 1999). On the other hand, impact studies in recent times have shown that ‘The Cultural Framework with the 3 Ps (products, practices, perspectives) is neither taught nor assessed by a sizeable number of teachers’ (Philips and Abbott, 2011: 7) and where there is attention to this, the analysis shows that:

Culture is seen as easy when teachers themselves have experiences in the culture. Student interest in culture as part of language study is acknowledged, but numerous responses indicate that it is done in English. There was minimal mention of the 3 Ps or of any organizing framework for teaching culture; examples imply that cultural topics are random and a result of teacher familiarity rather than thematic linkages. (ibid. :27)

A parallel study of learners in Higher Education in the USA nonetheless demonstrated some interest in ‘Cultures’ although much less so than in ‘Communication’ and ‘Communities’:

Still highly valued by students in the study, but to a noticeably lesser degree, was the Cultures goal area. Not a single student in the study saw Cultures as the “Main point of language learning,” in contrast to frequent mentions of this subtheme for both Communication and Communities. The interviews revealed that Cultures was considered by many students primarily as a knowledge rather than usage domain, although most students recognized the relationship between cultural knowledge and situationally appropriate language use and behaviour. (Magnan et al., 2014: 225)

An important dimension here is the interest among psychologists in intercultural education, although not directly in language teaching (Alkhesnam, 2012; Barrett, n.d.; Lantz, 2014).

There has been a long tradition of psychologists working with the world of work and commerce in cross-cultural training, symbolised by the success of the work of Hofstede (geert-hofstede.com), of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (mindtools.com/pages/article/seven-dimensions.htm), and the developmental model proposed by Bennett (1986 and 2011) together with the associated approach to measurement proposed by Hammer (Hammer et al. 2003). However, psychologists have not yet turned their attention to the classroom. In 1989, I attempted to discuss schema theory, Vygotsky, Moscovici and others, and what they might tell us about what happens when a (child or young person) learner enters a foreign language classroom and is invited to understand another way of experiencing the world through language learning. Empirical research by psychologists is still lacking and would be most welcome.

Methodology

The third area emerges from the more general account of pedagogical principles and foundations:

It is an area which is particularly open to empirical investigation of current practices, which are probably constructed on intuitive theories of cultural learning and generalised educational aims of social learning and ‘broadening pupils’ horizons’.

The lack of teacher training for cultural studies is a contributing factor and constitutes a significant dimension of this third area of enquiry. (1988: 23)

This was in part a matter of setting for myself and colleagues a research agenda for the next decade, in which we would, first, investigate current practice in (English) schools (Byram, Esarte-Sarries and Taylor, 1991), second, trace the impact of residence abroad on university language learners and potential language teachers and their understanding of a country whose language they were learning (Alred and Byram, 2002), third, develop an approach to preparing such students to make better use of their period of residence through carrying out ethnographic research (Roberts et al., 2001) and fourth, analyse serving teachers’ understanding of culture and the cultural dimension of language teaching (Byram and Risager, 1999; Sercu et al. 2005; Han, 2011; Aleksandrowicz-Pędich et al. 2003; Lázár, 2011). The focus on study and residence abroad was, I knew from lecturing in East Asia – and later South America – a Euro-centred if not anglocentric perspective. We tried to provide basic help for all teachers in a booklet produced at the Council of Europe (Byram, Gribkova and Starkey, 2002) and we collected work from other traditions in a book which focused as much on methods of research as results (Byram and Feng, 2006). Houghton (2014) has also pursued the theme of study abroad and intercultural competence. However, I do not intend either here or elsewhere in this article to provide a comprehensive and exhaustive review – despite there being a need for someone to do this – but rather to reflect the interest of Cultnet members and others who have advised me.

The fourth development, the surveys of teachers, told about what serving teachers remembered of their training – where usually little or no preparation for teaching a cultural

dimension was present – but the question of teacher training is one which remains largely unresolved. It is difficult to know what is happening in practice although some people suggest that there is little progress: ‘[In Sweden, there is a] lack of pre-service language teacher education modules, in-service courses and published handbooks on practical ideas for teachers’ (Lundgren) whereas Porto reports development in Argentina, as mentioned above. In Hungary, there has been a noticeable increase from the 1990s, and by the mid-2000s a third of trainee teachers of English were on courses where focus on Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) was compulsory. ‘Today ICC in EFL is taught and assessed in all of the English teacher training programs in Hungary but the same cannot be claimed about teacher training courses in other foreign languages’ (Lázár). In New Zealand, a scientific study has been carried out, albeit with disappointing results, with respect to developing learners’ cultural knowledge, which is itself only one element of intercultural competence:

In 2009 the Ministry of Education commissioned a report on a Ministry sponsored professional development programme for new teachers of additional languages (Harvey, Conway, Richards & Roskvist, 2009). One key finding of this study was that teachers were able to manage aspects of language teaching practice with respect to the development of learners’ language knowledge. However teachers had limited awareness of ways to implement the new curriculum shift that required them to develop learners’ cultural knowledge. One important factor that was hindering teachers’ development was the lack of a set of principles for developing the intercultural learners. For further details, see Conway, Richards, Harvey & Roskvist (2010). (Conway and Richards)

The lack of principles to which Conway and Richards refer takes us to the question of teaching methodology. This is an area in need of development:

A variety of adequate didactics for cultural studies in foreign language teaching and teacher education is available, many based on the five-savoir approach to intercultural competence by Byram (1997a) and many others still following the cross-cultural training approach (such as the Peace Corps publications, or the Cultural Detective) with the aim of preparing language learners for success when studying/working/living in a specific foreign country (and often to increase productivity). (Lázár)

Books which take the first of the approaches identified by Lázár have grown in number (e.g. Byram, Nichols and Stevens, 2001; Čaňková and Gill, 2002; Corbett, 2003 and 2010; Huber-Kriegler, Lázár and Strange, 2003; Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013) as have websites (e.g. http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/pestalozzi/home/training_units/Tu_en.asp) and books about the use of internet opportunities for collaboration (O’Dowd, 2007; Kohn and Warth, 2011). Experiments in methodology are above all carried out in doctoral work, which often remains unpublished (e.g. Yang, 2011; but see also Lázár, 2011 and Truong and Tran, 2014) whereas Houghton has published and developed from her PhD a body of work that presents various approaches to ICC-oriented pedagogy centres on the Intercultural Dialogue Model (IDM) (Houghton, 2012; Houghton, 2013a; Houghton, 2013b; Houghton & Yamada, 2012),

The aim of this is to help teachers systematically develop students' Intercultural Communicative Competence, and identity-development within it, by placing value judgment at the centre of teaching activity³.

Some people are optimistic: 'Pedagogy and methodology have been realized and we have been filled with different proposals, and these are also in continuous development' (Porto), and 'research done in Estonia, Hungary, Iceland and Poland concluded that training in ICC significantly increased culture-related activities (including work on knowledge, skills and attitudes) in the English class whereas a long stay abroad did not necessarily make teachers focus on the cultural dimension of language in their teaching <http://archive.ecml.at/mtp2/iccinte/results/en/research-projects.htm>' (Lázár). Others might say that these proposals are not being implemented in any wide and systematic way. Again New Zealand offers some interesting data based on survey, interviews and classroom observations:

In 2010 the Ministry of Education published a set of principles for intercultural communicative language teaching (Newton, Yates, Shearn & Nowtiski, 2010). In 2013 we carried out a research project to investigate teachers' understanding and implementation of these iCLT principles, surveying and interviewing NZ language teachers of Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Samoan and Spanish. In 2014 we have begun analysing the data and have presented some initial findings.

Initial results (...) suggest that the teachers believe in Principle One of integrating language and culture from the beginning (Newton et al. 2010), but issues were raised of the challenges of the medium of instruction at beginner level. Analysis of case study interviews indicated the teachers fell into two main groups. Those who had a dynamic approach to teaching language and culture were more fluent in the teaching language, had extensive overseas experience in the target culture and had ongoing professional development. The other group of teachers had a much more static approach to teaching culture. They lacked the background experience of the first group and tended to stay with teaching facts, figures and geographical features. (Richards and Conway)

In Bulgaria there has been systematic development of teacher training materials, although without the evaluation research done in New Zealand:

The course was the result of a long process of practitioner-driven reflection on the cultural dimension of language education. It was a course written by language teachers for language teachers. Some of the ideas covered in the course are influenced by fields of study and work not normally associated with language teaching, e.g. media studies, intercultural communication training.

³ Although this article is not focused on my model from Byram (1997a), this is an opportune point to say that Houghton and others have critiqued that model and developed it further, that others have pointed out its weaknesses, and that, frustrated as a PhD examiner to see students quoting the model without critiquing it, I produced a document circulated to Cultnet which gives a summary of such work to encourage them and their students to be more critical. This remains an informal document which I distribute where appropriate.

The umbrella term here is 'cultural dimension' covering three overlapping areas of interest: cultural content, intercultural communication, appropriate methodology.

The new term, *Intercultural Studies*, opens the way for considering heterogeneity, multiculturalism, and small interactional cultures rather than 'big' national level cultures. The terminology of the Syllabus is enriched further by the use of terms such as intercultural speaker, power distance, skills of interpretation and relation, third space, socialisation.

The linkage between a target language (L2) and its related target culture (C2) is challenged.

Course participants are invited to think of culture as a process of being and becoming cultural individuals.

The focus on norms is replaced with a focus on negotiation as speakers accommodate each other's needs and backgrounds

[British Council and the Teacher Training Institute (2001) *Intercultural Studies for Language Teachers*. Introduction to your course: pp v-x.]

(Davcheva)

Turning back to the LACE report (European Union, 2007), the first step in the analysis of methods was to analyse recommendations in curricula documents as to what methods might be used. In general such recommendations were 'often limited', and the report relies more on the self-reports of teachers through an online survey and telephone interviews. In answer to the question: *What didactic and methodological approaches are currently used by the teachers?*, the following summary is provided:

Methods, techniques, procedures:

- More than 80% of teachers indicate they use Oral teacher input.
 - Between 50 and 75% of respondents ticked Role plays; Task-based activities; Written information; Online information; Literature and the arts.
 - Between 25 and 49% of respondents ticked Immersion, School visits abroad and exchanges; Information using other than online or written media; Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL); Simulations and games; Cross-cultural dialogues; Internet-based collaborative learning.
 - Few teachers employ classical techniques of intercultural competence
- (European Union, 2007: 7)

The final remark indicates a lack of attention to intercultural competence *per se*, and it is evident from the LACE survey that teachers feel the lack of training mentioned above but also say they have practical difficulties:

The difficulty in developing intercultural competence in the language classroom mentioned most frequently by teachers is lack of time. Two aspects are involved: time

within the timetable to incorporate the development of intercultural skills, and time outside the classroom to plan such teaching and to organise international contacts, projects and so on.

The second main difficulty that teachers identify is shortage of suitable resources. Some teachers complain that the textbooks are inadequate. Shortage of computers and Internet access is a problem for some teachers in some countries. (European Union, 2007: 8)

If this is the case in Europe, it is no less so in other continents. For Argentina, Porto says that despite developments at policy level, lack of technological resources is compounded by factors such as access to education in general, lack of concern for equality of outcomes or opportunity, low teacher salaries, and that advances made are often at the literal and figurative expense of committed individuals. Many of these problems exist in other countries and continents, and low salaries lead to teachers having to take a second job, leaving no time for development.

Assessment and evaluation

The fourth area identified in 1988 was assessment and evaluation:

If cultural studies is to be taken seriously, we need to go beyond the present stance of the Minister for education in England who implies in criteria for assessing language teaching that only 'practical communication' can be assessed, leaving other aspects of language teaching — both language awareness work and cultural studies — beyond the pale of respectability provided by assessment. (Byram, 1988: 23)

This issue was not addressed in the LACE report as a topic raised with teachers or identified in curricula although the report does make some recommendations that assessment should be taken more seriously. In this respect the LACE report mirrors the lack of attention to assessment more generally, and there is little to report on assessment from the various countries and participants contributing to this article, except to confirm that there is little progress.

The work by Zarate and myself (Byram and Zarate, 1996) was a response to a request from the Council of Europe to provide a basis for defining levels of intercultural competence similar to those which ultimately appeared as the 6 levels of language competence and which have now gained world-wide recognition (Byram and Parmenter, 2012). We could not meet that request because we needed to do the more basic work of clarifying the concepts first⁴. At

⁴ A current project of the Council of Europe, 'Competences for Democratic Culture and Intercultural Dialogue', is, some two decades later, attempting to produce scalable descriptors of intercultural (and democratic) competences.

later points in time, other projects produced definitions of levels. The ‘Intercultural Competence Assessment’ (INCA) project described three levels which were to be used in the assessment of people in the workplace. The ‘Language On Line Portfolio Project’ (LOLIPOP) described six levels and used the same terminology of A1 to C2 as in the Common European Framework of Reference. Both of these projects have however become prey to the vagaries of the internet and have disappeared from their sites⁵. Another project supported by the European Union ‘CEFCult’ (www.cefcult.eu) offers a platform for having one’s intercultural competence assessed. Its theoretical base is taken from my 1997 model, the CEFR and INCA, and thus represents a development in the line of work begun in the 1990s. ~~Other offers of assessment are made by the Wergeland Centre in Oslo: <http://areyouintercultural.eu> and the Council of Europe’s Pestalozzi Programme: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/Pestalozzi/home/What/ICCTool_en.asp.~~ Further publications include Lussier et al. (2007) and Deardorff (2009) who gives an overview and a practical guide, as does Fantini (2009).

In 2014 the Intercultural Cities Project and the Pestalozzi Programme of the Council of Europe in cooperation with the Wergeland Centre, launched a new web application optimised for smartphones and tablets to help users recognize their intercultural competence in a playful way (http://areyouintercultural.eu?C=9WKLeYsxC0S4j6kU5ve-Kpf3jOEms9EIjxAxnS_K8M16RwyWU19RN4ZKtdamfS4bi-t7yj4G1oc.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fareyouintercultural.eu). This application is based on a self-assessment tool developed and tested by a group of 30 teachers, school heads and experts from all over Europe. The pdf version is available in 16 languages: <http://www.coe.int/web/pestalozzi/intercultural-matters> http://www.coe.int/web/pestalozzi/intercultural-matters?C=9WKLeYsxC0S4j6kU5ve-Kpf3jOEms9EIjxAxnS_K8M16RwyWU19RN4ZKtdamfS4bi-t7yj4G1oc.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.coe.int%2fweb%2fpestalozzi%2fintercultural-matters

Comment [A1]: Durk would it perhaps be better to put the links in a footnote to clear the text a bit?

An alternative approach is to focus on self-assessment, as became the direction taken at the Council of Europe where the *Autobiography on Intercultural Encounters* became a tool for self-analysis rather than assessment in any strict sense. It helps users to analyse their responses to intercultural encounters and how they have learnt from them and might respond to them through their future actions (www.coe.int/t/dg4/autobiography/default_en.asp).

Other approaches to assessment are provided by psychological testing, of which probably the best known is the Intercultural Development Inventory (Hammer, et al., 2003), based on Bennett’s model (1986 and 2011). Scarcely any of this work addresses however the relationship between language and culture and between linguistic/communicative competence and intercultural competence. Therefore, although these are widely used and useful beyond formal education, they do not offer a basis for school or university examinations, a need which is sharply felt in contemporary modes of thinking where all outcomes from education

⁵ There is some hope that a new site might be found for the materials perhaps at the University of Warwick (Anne Davidson-Lund, personal communication).

must be testable and tested. Attempts to meet this need are ongoing, for example in the work of the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages in the USA, as yet unpublished, or the work of the Interagency Language Roundtable in the same country although it states that ‘These Skill Level Descriptions are intended to serve primarily as guidelines for use in government settings’ (govtilr.org/Skills/Competence.htm#11).

In short, despite considerable activity and a clear interest shown by authorities and professional groups in finding an adequate approach to the assessment of intercultural competence with or without an integration with linguistic competence, the fruits of this activity have been meagre.

Looking forward

The past 25 years can help us to look forward if we consider what have been the facilitators and obstacles to the development and implementation of the ideas present in the 1988 article and in the work of other people around that time. There is consensus among Cultnet members that the attention to theory has been itself a facilitator although the complexity of theory is simultaneously a problem. More optimistically, there is widespread acknowledgement of the ‘intercultural’ dimension of language teaching in policies and curricula, and increasingly so in textbooks. This is due not only to the development of theory but also, no doubt, to the focus on interculturality more generally in the academic world and in the societies which academics comment upon. ‘Interculturality’ collocates frequently with ‘diversity’ or ‘super-diversity’, or ‘globalisation’ and ‘mobility’, or with ‘multicultural’ and ‘intercultural’ policies (Barrett, 2014).

Comment [A2]: Should be: Barrett 2013

Technological changes have been rapid in the last 25 years and the internet provides opportunities for interactions among learners, a point made explicitly about China (Qin). A collection of articles (Byram, Holmes and Savvides, 2013) demonstrates how teacher-researchers using internet and other approaches are making strides in the right direction, with the hope that they will influence other teachers. Two approaches might be mentioned. First there is the use of the web to provide tools for assessment as mentioned above but also for teaching, e.g. for preparation and experience of study abroad (<http://www.ierest-project.eu/>). Second the web offers opportunities for the creation of new international communities of language learners working on common projects (Porto 2014).

For the major obstacle over the last decades has been in bringing new ideas to teachers: ‘Current research does not reach teachers’ (Lundgren) a view which is supported by other Cultnet members and ‘confusion in the use of terminology (...) is not helping’ (Lázár). The recent emphasis in the assessment of university research in Britain on ‘impact’, i.e. the tracing of how research reaches beyond the academy and influences change in society, is an indication that the problem is not only in our field and that researchers must make efforts to bring their work to ‘users’ which in our case means teachers and policy makers. That this has not happened in any substantial way is indicated by the surveys in Europe and the USA

mentioned earlier and in doctoral work in other continents which has investigated how teachers understand the cultural dimension.

Other obstacles, in Sweden, include:

- a) The national syllabus is not anchored in theory; it contradicts international and national overall educational aims; the text narrows the perspective towards factual knowledge, its concepts are vague and it lacks assessment criteria
 - b) National tests do not assess intercultural understanding, teachers are guided by quantitative criteria, language proficiency dominates teaching
 - c) Secondary school organisation, focused on specific subjects (e.g. ELT) and taught by language specialists, obstructs cross-curricular thematic education
- Teachers lack time and supervision for didactic reflection and development, which leads to an uncritical attitude to new concepts in central guidelines; traditional culture studies dominate (Lundgren)

The demands on teachers are often such that they will not devote what is seen to be extra energy to a cultural dimension, which itself suggests that the integration of culture and language is not yet understood. Lázár (2011: 124-5) found that teachers pay attention to 'culture-free or neutral content with the focus still largely resting on grammatical accuracy and without raising cultural awareness or developing intercultural communicative competence (...) even culturally conscious and devoted novice teachers are often too pre-occupied by their own developing teacher personality to have the time and energy to incorporate the cultural dimension in language teaching'.

There is then much to do and the key is teacher education, initial and in-service. Let us hope that the next 25 years will bring more attention to the value of teachers and teaching in a super-diverse and globalised world. The language teaching profession has significant educational and political tasks and responsibilities before it.

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